



Granite: Aberdeen University Postgraduate Interdisciplinary Journal *Volume One*

Editorial

Hello, and welcome to *Granite*: Aberdeen University Postgraduate Interdisciplinary Journal. What has now become *Granite* first originated with a number of conversations that Andrew and fellow postgraduates had during their pursuit of master's degrees in Edinburgh. Questions which arose included 'What actually happens in a journal', 'When should postgraduates publish', 'What should postgraduates publish, and who with'? Such issues were considered against a backdrop of debates concerning peer review (Bohannon, 2013), peer reviewers (Ward, 2016) and 'open access' journals (Solomon, Laakso, & Björk, 2013; Worlock, 2004). Most importantly, what is seen by many to be the bedrock or backbone of academia – peer reviewed publication – and the expectations, requirements, and demands of it, are usually learnt through the experiences gained during the process of producing their first publications, including attendant conversations with supervisors. There would seem to us to be value and utility in providing a platform for postgraduate students to learn about the academic editorial and publication process.

With this in mind, Andrew continued his quest at the University of Aberdeen, and he, Nathan, Gideon, Ross and Aboseh (founding editors of the journal) won a student competition, hosted by the University's Researcher Development Unit, for their journal proposition; subsequently founding *Granite*. A small seed grant was used to host an incubator day to foster initial ideas, but also to recruit and elect an editorial board (currently comprised of Haley, Claire, and Alex, in addition to the founding editors listed above). Almost two years after these initial meetings, we are delighted to present the first, of what we hope will be many, volumes of *Granite*.

Granite was established to showcase the exciting and unique research being done by postgraduates at the University of Aberdeen. It seeks to provide an avenue for

postgraduates to explore the publishing process, and to provide an opportunity to progress in their early academic careers through publication of peer-reviewed articles in an open access journal.

There is certainly a number of postgraduate publications. For instance we have *Tor: The Open Review of the Social Sciences* (Tor, 2016), a student-led, peer-reviewed and open access journal developed as part of the *South West Doctoral Training Centre*, to longer term ventures such as *Assemblage: the Sheffield Graduate Journal of Archaeology* (Assemblage, 2016). The advent of online-only journals, and the ease at which webpages can be created and uploaded has promoted such endeavours (there are even guides available; Eve, 2016).

The increased participation of postgraduates in the publishing process, and specifically in online open access formats, may be the start of a changing zeitgeist in academia (Else, 2016), prompting a move for the inclusion of postgraduates in the editorial work of academic journals. At the 2016 Royal Geographical Society-Institute of British Geographers Conference in London, Klaus Dodds reiterated the overwhelmingly positive experience he had had with postgraduates in his position as an editor of *The Geographical Journal*, citing postgraduates as being excellent peer-reviewers due to the care, questioning and engagement they brought to that responsibility. Perhaps this kind of feedback could provide an impetus for other publications and editorial boards to consider the implementation of formal editorial roles for postgraduate assistants.

Now for *Granite*. Issue One contains papers emerging from *Granite's* own symposium – 'Engaging the Intersections of Humanity and Technology' – held in April 2016 and organised by Claire. This issue highlights the interdisciplinary work that *Granite* wishes to maintain and to cultivate.

Issue Two stems from the annual University of Aberdeen, School of Geosciences Postgraduate Conference, held in June 2016. As part of the event, postgraduates were offered the opportunity to write a short conference proceedings paper, or to submit their posters and such offerings are to be found in this issue.

Granite's third issue will present the potential for working with postgraduates outwith the University of Aberdeen. Our editor Alex has led the issue and it will be composed

of papers presented at the recent Northeast Postgraduate History Conference held on 30 April, 2016. This conference was organised by the co-convenors of the History Department Postgraduate Seminar Series. This publication will showcase the exciting research being conducted by scholars of Scandinavian history, myth, and literature. We hope that this issue will illustrate the benefits and potential of cooperative interdisciplinarity.

An online format gives *Granite* the flexibility to present different types of work seen in academia. Papers can now feature supplementary video or audio components (e.g. Vannini & Taggart, 2013). Our aim is to provide an outlet that is not limited by disciplinary boundaries and that is receptive to all forms of academic output. On behalf of everyone at *Granite*, we look forward to an exciting future for the journal and for an established place in the postgraduate community of the University of Aberdeen.

Haley R. French

Andrew S. Maclaren

Aberdeen, May 2017

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